

POE'S SOUTH POLE NOVEL. Strange Likeness to Borchgrevink's Description.

POE FOUND A NEW RACE THERE.

His Fanciful Picture of the Antarctic in "The Narrative of A. Gordon Pym."

Professor Borchgrevink has a queer little account to settle with Edgar Allan Poe. It comes out in this wise:

Pages 25 and 26 of the Sunday Journal of two weeks ago would have brought much joy to the heart of the late Mr. Disraeli, Sr., for he would have found on them one of the most remarkable curiosities of literary coincidence possible to imagine. On page 25 was Borchgrevink's story, as told by himself, of his visit to the new Antarctic world; and on page 26 was the account of the discovery of two unpublished manuscripts by Poe. Thus, back to back, with only the thin paper between them, were placed the geographical and literary sensations of the day. Out of this chance juxtaposition has grown the train of literary coincidences referred to.

To both the American dreamer and the Norwegian traveller the strange, half-guessed-at, half-unreal world of the South Pole offered irresistible attractions. In both cases the attraction led to characteristic results. The hardy Norseman put on his sea togs, hauled his furs out of the campfire chest and sailed away for the underworld. The dreaming, erratic, god-diffident and devil-driven Marylander thought out a wild, eerie novel—and left only a fragment. But in that fragment he set the pace of mystic adventure which Verne and Haggard and Clark Russell and Janvier have since so laboriously followed.

The novel was called "The Narrative of A. Gordon Pym." It isn't known much of outside the circle of Poe students, for it has been the sad fashion of publishers to tuck it away in the second series of Poe's Prose Tales with such a lot of unworthy and trifling stuff that the volume has been decreed and abandoned by general readers. It is a gem in its way, though, and those not yet acquainted with the cruise of the Antarctic adventurer have a treat in store. The narrative is a masterpiece of art, concealing art and introductory deals with stowaways, mutiny and abandonment at sea. In sober, sailorlike fashion, the story is told, but with a certain deceptive quality.

By page, Poe unfolds the true purpose of his novel—the second series of Poe's Prose Tales. This was to be accomplished on board the *June*, "a fine-looking topsail schooner of a hundred and eighty-ton burden." Captain Guy of Liverpool, a master, Southward and southward pushed the schooner, past Kerguelen Land and Possession Island and so over the borders of the Antarctic Circle, and here is where Poe and Borchgrevink so strangely grasp hands. Borchgrevink took "traces of animals and vegetation" on the outlying rampart of islands, which led him to believe that similar life existed on the continent. Poe not only found the same traces on the same islands, but he found his references verified when he reached the mainland. "The vegetation of the islands," says Borchgrevink, "consisted chiefly of lichens." So says Poe, only in addition he found a deceitful moss, resembling saxifrage, and a sort of acrid cabbage.

"If polar bears can live in the Arctic, why not in the Antarctic?" asks Borchgrevink. They do live there, answers Poe, for on a certain seventeenth of January, A. Gordon Pym and his companions, while running the great ice field and entering the open sea beyond, fought with and killed a gigantic polar bear that was "fully fifteen feet in length. His body was perfectly white and very coarse, curling tightly. The eyes were blood-red and larger than those of the Arctic bear; the snout also more rounded, rather resembling the snout of the bulldog."

"If there are Esquimaux in the Arctic," says Borchgrevink, "why may there not be a hitherto unknown and unsuspected race of people living somewhere in the interior of the immense territory which stretches for thousands of miles toward the South Pole?"

Many years ago Poe asked the same question. But such a possible answer to the question would have driven him wild if he had not answered it. So he breathed that blue-tinted, uneasy soul of his into A. Gordon Pym, of Nantucket, and sent him out to find the unknown race of the Antarctic continent. Pym and his companions found the people of a jet black, dusky, brownish set of savages, clothed in skins worn with the "hairy side in," armed with clubs and spears, and living in villages called *black-holes*. They were a murderous set, and if the Borchgrevink expedition ever realized on Poe's idea, it will be well for its members to keep their trigger fingers from frost-bite.

"The fauna and flora of Antarctica offer many fascinating possibilities," says Borchgrevink. So does Poe, who describes them. Among the fauna, for instance, a "dead animal three feet long, six inches in height, with four very short legs, the feet armed with long claws of a brilliant scarlet and resembling coral, the body covered with white, silky hair, the tail that of a rat, the head cat-like, but with flapping ears, and the teeth a rich scarlet."

It is in connection with the fauna that Borchgrevink and Poe run in such close parallel, that it is difficult to say which is rarer and which explorer. They both use identical language. Borchgrevink, in talking of the strange variety of penguin which he found, says: "The penguins climbed on the cliffs, sometimes to a height of 1,000 feet. With their heads and feet the birds had carefully put away most of the pebbles and stones from their footpaths. When snow covered the ground the birds had, by constant use by the birds, become smooth and neat."

SATURDAY NIGHT FUN

No. 2—As Enjoyed by Hiram Perkins, Esq., State Legislator.

At precisely 4 o'clock one fine Saturday afternoon Mr. Hiram Perkins, of Schoharie County, might have been seen entering the Fifth Avenue Hotel for a conference with his lord and master. In fact, Mr. Perkins was actually seen entering the hotel by an assiduous gentleman who will be described in another part of this story.

Now, Mr. Perkins devotes himself during the Summer months to agricultural pursuits, and in the Winter to the task of making laws for the people of New York; but, no matter whether he is engaged in driving his own oxen or in placing the yoke on the scarcely less tractable and brow-beaten metropolis, his mind turns ever to New York and those delicious urban joys that are ever so dear to the provincial heart.

At 6 o'clock Mr. Perkins emerged from the white marble hostelry, after a long discussion with his boss concerning a bill prepared by himself to provide every farmer in the State with a silk hat at the expense of the taxpayers of the city of New York. The State legislator was in a thoroughly good humor as he stepped out into Broadway, for his boss had pronounced his bill "a wise and beneficent piece of legislation," and declared that he would put it through both houses in less than six cracks of the whip.

The observant gentleman who had seen Mr. Perkins enter the hotel, and happened, by the merest accident, to be strolling along the sidewalk when he emerged therefrom, noted that his appearance had undergone a certain change in the meantime. At the advice of his chief, the statesman from Schoharie had combed the hay from his whiskers and removed the milk from his boots and the clinders from his ears, and yet a certain something still remained in his make-up that attracted the attention of the various birds of prey whom he met in the course of his slow walk uptown. Now, he had not said a word to a single human being in regard to the project that was uppermost in his mind, and yet it seemed to him that every man that he met knew perfectly well that Hiram Perkins was starting out for a glorious Saturday night's frolic in the very heart of the metropolis. The fact was that as he walked along he was visibly glowing over the prospect of the fun that was lurking along upper Broadway and Sixth avenue in anticipation of his coming.

Two or three big drinks of whiskey in a Broadway saloon put Mr. Perkins on the very best of terms with himself, and he started out in quest of something to eat, followed, unknown to himself, by the same gentleman who had seen him enter and leave the castle of his chief. This gentleman was well dressed and had a silk hat, a bluish-black mustache, clean-cut aquiline profile, steely eyes and slender, well-gloved hands. In short, he was precisely the type of man that would have passed anywhere, except, perhaps, on upper Broadway, for a wealthy, conservative merchant of retiring, scholarly tastes and methodical habits. Mr. Perkins seated himself at the only vacant table in the restaurant, and the scholarly gentleman, who followed him ten minutes later, dropped into the chair opposite to him and gave his order to the waiter in a low, well-bred voice.

Then the newcomer took from his pocket some letters ornamented with big crests and seals that at once attracted the attention of his vis-a-vis, and began to study them diligently, but with a puzzled expression of countenance. Among the letters which he placed before him the astute Hiram noticed two or three bank notes of large denomination, and also two or three checks protruding from their envelope. Verily, this man was travelling well-heeled. It would be a mercy if he escaped being robbed before night.

Pretty soon the merchant looked up from his task, and in hesitating accents said: "I beg your pardon, sir, but I am a stranger here, and as I see that you are a New Yorker, I would like to ask you where the Metropolitan Museum of Art is, and also, at what time the services begin in Dr. John Hall's church?" The rural statesman was not at all ill-pleased to be mistaken for a New Yorker, and, indeed, as he was drinking his coffee with his forefinger inside the cup in true urban style, it was not surprising that his neighbor should have fallen into the error of believing him to be a town bred. He was not able to give the information about the church, but he did know where the Metropolitan Museum of Art was, for he had long since inspected it with a view to introducing a bill that should convert it into a hotel for the entertainment of visiting legislators at the expense of the city.

The stranger thanked him courteously, and then asked him if the Chemical Bank kept open on Sunday, and whether it was regarded as a safe repository for funds. Mr. Perkins checked to himself as he made answer. It was seldom, indeed, that he encountered any one ignorant enough of city life to apply to him for information.

"I really hope I am not troubling you, sir," continued the stranger, earnestly, "but the fact is that I have just arrived from South Africa, where I have been living for the past year, and I am anxious to find some good, safe bank as soon as possible. I would also like to hear Dr. Hall preach and see your famous Museum of Art. But I am particularly anxious about the bank, for, to tell you the truth (here he lowered his voice to a mysterious whisper and glanced furtively around him), I left a very valuable package in the safe at my hotel, and I don't altogether like the looks of that clerk who took it. I suppose, however, that in a house of the size and splendor of the Seidoff's a stranger need have no fear of any crooked business?"

Somehow Mr. Perkins had become very much interested in this courteous and confiding stranger who had just returned from Africa, with checks and bank notes loose in his pocket and a package so valuable that he was afraid to entrust it to the clerk at the Seidoff's. As a general thing, he mistrusted Broadway folk, but this man he would take under his protection, for there was no telling what good use he might be put to.

An hour later they seated themselves in roomy orchestra chairs well down toward the front, and looked up at a stage that was bright with electric lights and peopled by heres of sensually clad hours gay in bright silken tights, dancing with snowy, outstretched arms, and with smiles of welcome on their faces. Altogether, the scene was one well calculated to dazzle and bewilder the most knowing and experienced agriculturist that ever set out for a night's fun in New York, and both Mr. Perkins and his new friend admitted that it would be hard to find a group of more beautiful and graceful young women than those who disappeared themselves before their eyes.

"It must be a fine thing to live in New York and see such sights as this every night in the week," said the stranger, with a curiously sharp glance at his companion, who was gazing with distended eyes at the scene before him.

"By gum! But it won't be possible much longer," exclaimed Mr. Perkins, triumphantly, for he had that evensong hatred of his betters—that unwillingness to permit New Yorkers to do what they wish to—that is characteristic of every true haysed legislator. "It's again all morality for ter hev them gals a-caperin' round in them long pink stockin's, an' nuthin' else onto 'em 'cept mebbe a nosegay, or suthin' like that. By cracky! That fat one on the end's a jimdandy. Gosh! but I'm goin' ter interduce a bill ter hev her all this stoppered, or regglitized accordin' ter law!"

"And so you are a legislator, sir?" remarked the stranger, with increased deference in his tones and a new gleam of interest in his eye.

"Yes, sir, member from Schoharie County," replied Hiram, briskly, and just then he remembered that he had been passing himself off as a New Yorker the entire evening.

"Ah! I suppose that is where your country place is?" rejoined the other, who was something of a mind-reader in an amateur way.

He was something of a mind-reader in an amateur way.

"It's a hard thing," he said to himself, "to have to throw down a benefactor, but these are hard times, and in my profession a man has got no more right to a heart than if he were a member of a bond syndicate. But when I think of what I and my pals owe to this man, of the assistance that he has given us, I swear I hate to do him. But he must be done. When I first went into this business there was plenty of things for the jays to do in the evenings to pass the time away. But now there's no more fun in the town except what we can give them, and they prefer to do all their business with us. I used to have to hunt them up. Now they come here looking for me. I suppose it's reading about us in the papers that gives them the idea for it. Anyway, they're not content to go back to Schoharie without running up against it."

The curtain fell, and the stranger awoke from his reverie. "Come," he said, "come with me and I will introduce you to that fat charmer in purple tights, who seems to have enchanted your romantic youthful fancy. I know her full well, and she will be glad to meet any friend of mine."

Then the stranger, softly treading, bore the State legislator to a place of refreshment situated on a side street, and not far from the hotel in which he said the siren of the purple tights and her fellow-artists found lodging. Cheerfully he ordered two glasses of beer, and, with steady hand and untroubled mind, poured into one of them the contents of a small vial which he took from his pocket. "Well, here's happy days!" he exclaimed, as he drained the other glass to the bottom.

"Drink hearty!" cried Hiram Perkins, gayly, as the amber rivulet descended the whisker-crustured channel that lead from his mouth to the regions behind his vest. Then the glass fell from his hand and he dropped into a profound and peaceful slumber, and as the stranger was fitting away he turned on the threshold, came back, and restored to the legislator's pocket a simple, greasy five-dollar note, the outside covering of the thick wad that he had just taken from him.

"I cannot take it all," he said, gently, "for without you the 'knockout' industry would have been dead long ago."

Then the door closed softly, and Hiram Perkins was left alone with his five-dollar note, and his chemically prepared jag, and no way of finding out the time of day.

JAMES L. FORD.

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Put into a dish to cool, add to it a couple of slices of lemon and two or three pieces of stick cinnamon for flavoring. When cold and ready to use remove the lemon and cinnamon and pour into glasses until half full. Now whip one pint of double cream firm, flavor with vanilla and sweeten with four ounces of powdered sugar. Finish filling the glasses with the whipped cream and keep in a cold place until ready to serve.

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